



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



*Dn 171.2.7*

Harvard College Library



FROM THE GIFT OF THE  
DANTE SOCIETY  
OF  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.







100  
Lm 17/2.17

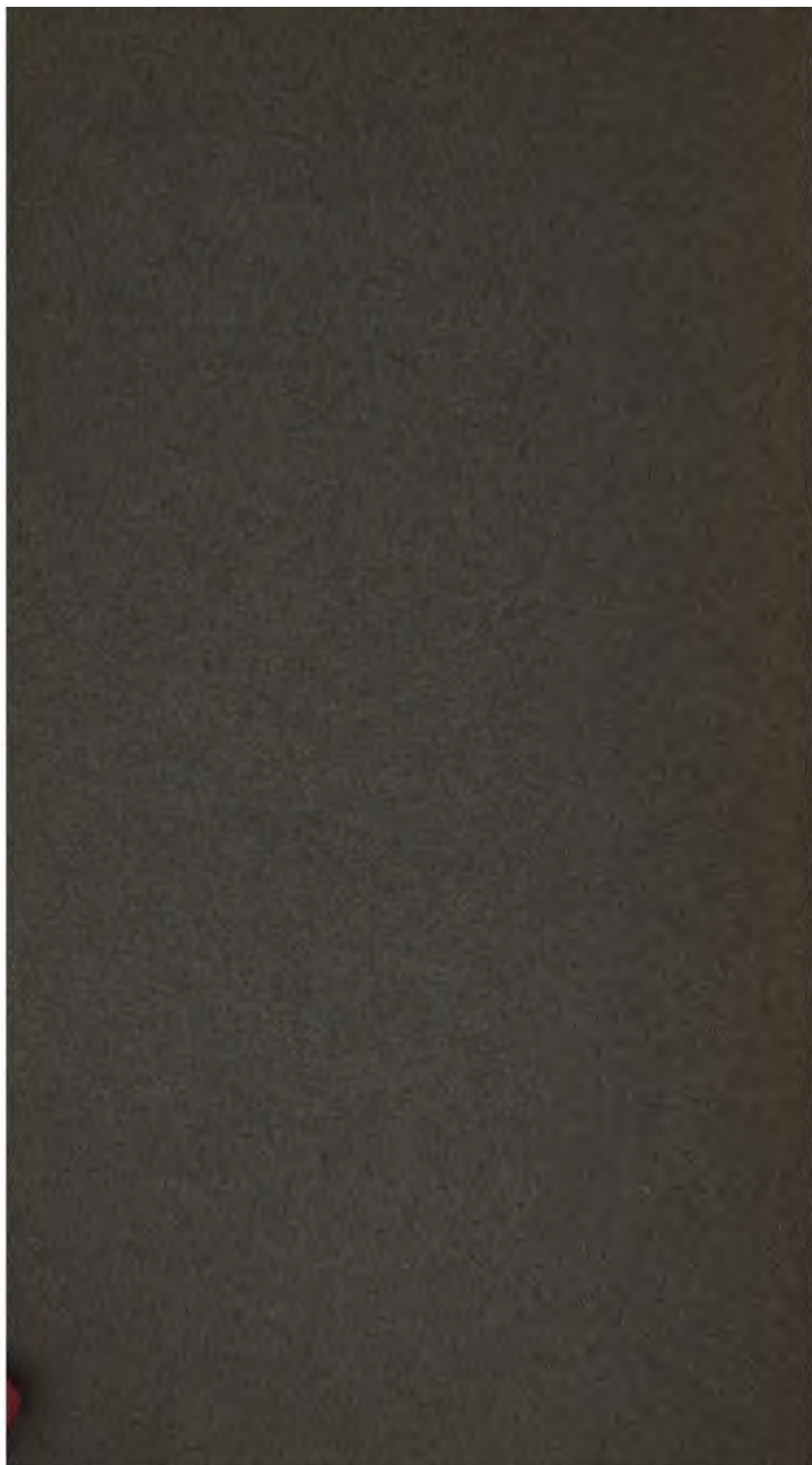
# The Great Italians of the Divina Commedia

A LECTURE TO THE MEMBERS OF  
THE DANTE SOCIETY, LONDON  
JANUARY 9, 1907

BY THE  
HONBLE. WILLIAM WARREN VERNON, M.A. (OXON.)  
ACCADEMICO CORRISPONDENTE DELLA CRUSCA

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION

LONDON, 1907



*Presented to the American Dante Society  
by the Author*

①

# The Great Italians of the Divina Commedia

A LECTURE TO THE MEMBERS OF  
THE DANTE SOCIETY, LONDON,  
JANUARY 9, 1907

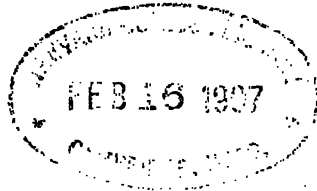
BY THE  
HONBLE. WILLIAM WARREN VERNON, M.A. (OXON.)  
ACCADEMICO CORRISPONDENTE DELLA CRUSCA

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION

LONDON, 1907



Dr. 17/2.7



to the  
through  
the Dante Society

X.

Dec 1912-2-5

Before I commence my lecture, I am anxious to say one word of deep sympathy for my very dear old friend Dr Moore, whom a terrible calamity has prevented from presiding at this meeting. The late Mrs Moore had been suffering from a long and painful illness for more than two years, but there had been no indication of an immediate termination of her life.

she died on the 27th of December. Under these distressing circumstances my kind friend Mr Tedder, the learned Secretary of the Athenaeum Club, has been so good as to put off a very important engagement, in order to do me the great service of taking the Chair this evening.

*William Warren Vernon*  
9 January 1907

Dr. 1212-4

## THE GREAT ITALIANS OF THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

ONE striking feature of the *Divina Commedia* is the way in which Dante deals with things as distinguished from persons. He gives picturesque reality by describing objects from everyday life, and the most homely utensils of domestic furniture in Tuscany serve as his similes. He draws illustrations from the occupations and habits of the soldier; of the sailor; of the husbandman; of the shepherd; of the mountaineer; from a groom curry-combing a horse; from a scullion scaling a fish or seething flesh in a cauldron; from a cook placing stewpans together on the fire; from the blind beggars at the doors of the churches; or from the watch-dog snapping at the mendicant. His observation of things embraces every phase of the daily life of his time.

Far otherwise is it when he comes to speak of persons. All is then changed, and there is hardly a character introduced into the *Commedia* which is not one of distinction for good or evil. Hardly one can be called commonplace. That this is no accidental circumstance we have emphatic proof. In the concluding lines of *Paradiso XVII.*, Dante puts into the mouth of his great-great-grandfather, Cacciaguida, a reminder that the strictures which he is about to utter against his native country are intended to smite chiefly upon the loftiest summits, that is, upon the reputation of the Great Ones of the Land. It is for this reason that in Paradise, in Purgatory, and in Hell, those spirits only have been shown to him who are recognised by fame:



"Questo tuo grido farà, come vento,  
 Che le più alte cima più percote;  
 E ciò non fa d'onor poco argomento.  
 Però ti son mostrate in queste rote,  
 Nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa,  
 Pur l'anime che son di fama note;  
 Chè l'anima di quel ch'ode non posa,  
 Nè ferma fede per esempio ch'haia  
 La sua radice incognita e nascosa,  
 Nè per altro argomento che non paia."

(*Par.* XVII. 133-142.)

The instructions which Dante thus purports to have received from his revered ancestor were peculiarly congenial to his own feelings. The whole tenor of Cacciaguida's address to him in *Par.* XV. had been to demonstrate how illustrious was the descent of Cacciaguida, and consequently that of Dante, to whom pride of ancestry was as the breath of his nostrils. The acerbity of his retort to Farinata degli Uberti, in the tenth Canto of the *Inferno*, who had spoken disparagingly of his forefathers, fully demonstrates his quickness to take offence. Of the sinfulness of this Pride we know that he was fully conscious. In the thirteenth Canto of the *Purgatorio* (ll. 133-138) he has a conversation with Sapia of Siena, who, like other spirits of the Envious, is sitting on the ground with her eyelids sewn up. She asks Dante how it happens that he is able to walk about with his eyes unclosed, and breathing as he speaks. Dante had just ascended into this Cornice from the one below it, where Pride is punished, and he tells Sapia that after his death, when he comes to Purgatory, he will undoubtedly have to undergo a certain amount of penance for Envy, but only for a short time, as he has not been so great an offender in that respect. Far greater is his dread of the torment below, namely, for Pride, so that even now the burden of the Proud is weighing upon him :

“Gli occhi,” diss’io, “mi fieno ancor qui tolti;  
 Ma picciol tempo, che poca è l’offesa  
 Fatta per esser con invidia vòlta.  
 Troppa è più la paura, ond’è sospesa  
 L’anima mia, del tormento di sotto,  
 Che già lo incarco di laggiù mi pesa.”

(*Purg.* XIII. 133-138.)

But although pride of birth was so prominent a feature in Dante’s character, he recognised to the full that nobility has its responsibilities as well as its privileges. His standard of conduct was high, and he reminds his contemporaries that if they do not keep their escutcheons undefiled their distinction of lineage will soon perish :

“O poca nostra nobilità di sangue!  
 Se gloriar di te la gente fai  
 Quaggiù, \* \* \*  
 \* \* \*

Ben sei tu manto che tosto raccorce,  
 St che, se non s’appon di die in die,  
 Lo tempo va dintorno con le force.” \*

(*Par.* XVI. 1-9.)

All through the *Commedia* we find proofs of Dante’s sympathy with the great and his contempt for the small. It was not in his nature to suffer fools gladly, and when he comes across them he takes no pains to conceal his contempt. The great-souled man (*μεγαλόψυχος*) is always treated with respect. The small-minded man (*μικρόψυχος*) receives but scant consideration. There is a notable instance in the tenth Canto of the *Inferno*, where Dante relates his interview with the high-souled Farinata degli Uberti, the great Ghibelline leader. Dante, though no

\* The late Duke of Sermoneta, the famous blind Dantist, who was the lineal descendant of the great family of Caetani (or Guatani) of which Pope Boniface VIII. was a scion, once told me how much he felt the truth of this passage.



longer a Guelph, is intensely antagonistic to Farinata, who on two occasions had driven his ancestors into exile, and contemptuously reminds him, Dante, of that fact. And yet all through the conference, which is of considerable length, Dante treats Farinata with the greatest deference and courtesy. On the other hand, when the shade of the small-minded Cavalcante Cavalcanti timidly interposes in the conversation, not only does Dante represent Farinata as taking no more notice of Cavalcante's presence than as if such a person had never existed, but his own demeanour towards Cavalcante is almost as contemptuous as that of Farinata. And yet this poor-spirited soul had good claims to consideration from both of them, for Farinata's daughter was the wife of Cavalcante's son, and that son, Guido Cavalcanti, the celebrated poet, was the first and best-loved of all Dante's friends, of whom, in the *Vita Nuova* §3 he says: "Quegli cui io chiamo primo de'miei amici." His answer to Cavalcante's eager inquiry about Guido is so ambiguous that the poor father thinks his son is dead and despairingly drops back again into the flames. It is true that Dante afterwards becomes conscious of his seeming want of kindness, and asks Farinata to reassure Cavalcante about his son, but even then he rather contemptuously mentions him as *quel caduto*, and we may entertain some doubts as to whether Farinata would condescend to give the message.

At the close of Dante's long conversation with Farinata, the latter, true to his haughty character, while answering Dante's inquiry as to who are his companions in the fiery tomb, briefly mentions an Emperor and a Cardinal alone among a countless multitude, and passes over all the others as unworthy of notice:

“Dissemi: ‘Qui con più di mille giaccio:  
 Qua dentro è lo secondo Federico,  
 E il Cardinale, e degli altri mi taccio.’”  
 (*Inf.* X. 118-120.)

This may be taken to give the keynote to the way Dante sifts the personages throughout his poem. Only two deserving of notice out of "more than a thousand"!

The first souls he encounters in Hell are those who had lived without infamy and without praise:

"la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,  
Che invidiosi son d'ogni altra sorte.  
Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa,  
Misericordia e giustizia gli sdegna,  
Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa."  
(*Inf.* III. 47-51.)

In the immediate subject to which I am inviting your attention this evening I wish to speak only of great Italians. There are, no doubt, men of other nationalities mentioned in Dante's Poem of the greatest distinction and renown, but Dante's world was Italy—his State was Tuscany—his city was Florence. He himself is the first and chiefest Great Italian in the *Divina Commedia*, for the *Commedia* is Dante himself. In his great poem he reveals his most secret thoughts, his hopes and fears, his loves and hatreds. It is a masterpiece of candid self-portraiture. Dante was fully conscious of his own greatness, and never attempted to conceal his sense of his merits. The sublime self-esteem on the part of many of the greatest men is well known, and we have notable examples in Alexander the Great and Napoleon. Boccaccio, in his *Life of Dante*, remarks that we may see many proofs of the contempt in which he held his own party—the *Bianchi* Guelphs—both in the actions of his life, and by his allusions to it in various passages of the *Divina Commedia*.

One of Dante's most scornful utterances was his famous speech before he departed on the Embassy to Rome, during the time that he was one of the *Priori* of Florence. It had been settled that an embassy should be sent to the Pope to oppose the coming to



Florence of Charles de Valois (surnamed *Sansterre*). And when it came to be deliberated who should be first in this legation, all said, "Let it be Dante." At which request Dante, having remained in thought some time, exclaimed: "If I go, who remains? and if I remain, who goes?"—almost as if he had been the only one among them who was worthy of estimation, and on whose account all the rest were esteemed. (Balbo's *Vita di Dante*.)

In the eleventh Canto of the *Purgatorio*, Oderisi d'Agobbio, the miniature painter, soliloquises on the emptiness of renown, and the way one great painter—Cimabue—is overtaken and passed by a younger one, namely, his pupil Giotto, after which he adds:

"Così ha tolto l'uno all'altro Guido  
 La gloria della lingua: e forse è nato  
 Chi l'uno e l'altro caccierà di nido."  
 (*Purg.* XI. 97-99.)

Benvenuto says that this super-eminent poet, Dante, not only ousts the two Guidos from the abode (*nido*) of fame, but also all others before himself and after himself even unto this day. More than five hundred years have elapsed since these words of Benvenuto were written, and between that time and now but one poet has flourished worthy to stand in the same rank with Dante, viz., our own Shakespeare. We must not forget, in speaking of Dante's high estimate of himself, that he relates how in *Limbo* he was welcomed into the group of the six greatest poets of the earth—himself the sixth—the others being Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan. He thus describes the scene:

"Così vidi adunar la bella scuola  
 Di quei signor dell'altissimo canto (*i.e.*, Homer),  
 Che sopra gli altri com'aquila vola.

Da ch'ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,  
 Volsersi a me con salutevol cenno:  
 E'l mio Maestro sorrise di tanto:  
 E più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,  
 Ch'esser mi fecer della loro schiera,  
 Sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno."

(*Inf.* IV. 94-102.)

I think the best way of bringing before you the Great Italians—men and women, good and bad—that are mentioned in the *Divina Commedia*, will be by classifying them under different heads in the following order:

Saints.  
 Fathers of the Church.  
 Theologians.  
 Popes.  
 Cardinals.  
 Rulers.  
 Warriors.  
 Statesmen.  
 Citizens.  
 Poets.  
 Writers.  
 Musicians.  
 Painters.  
 Physicians.

Scilicet? — Women I place in a class by themselves.

#### SAINTS, FATHERS AND THEOLOGIANS

There are nine Saints of Latin birth, who are either mentioned or alluded to in the *Commedia*, and three of these are Fathers of the Church, namely, St. Ambrose, of Milan; St. Jerome, of Dalmatia, which was then Latin; and St. Gregory the Great, of Rome. Although St. Ambrose is not directly alluded to in the *Divina Commedia*, yet the spirits of the Great Rulers in the

\*



Flowery Valley (*Purg.* VIII.) in Purgatory are represented as chanting the beautiful Compline Hymn *Te lucis ante terminum*, of which St. Ambrose was the author. But in his Eighth Epistle Dante, when censuring the Italian Cardinals for their neglect of the Fathers of the Church, mentions St. Ambrose by name: "Jacet Gregorius tuus in telis areanarum; jacet Ambrosius in neglectis clericorum latibulis; jacet Augustinus; adjectus Dionysius, Damascenus, et Beda." (*Epist.* VIII. 7.) It will be seen that Dante here speaks of two of the four great Fathers of the Church, though one of them, St. Augustine of Hippo, was not an Italian. The other two are St. Jerome and St. Gregory.

St. Jerome (Dante writes):

"vi scrisse lungo tratto  
Di secoli degli Angeli creati  
Anzi che l'altro mondo fosse fatto."

(*Par.* XXIX. 37-39.)

In the Crystalline Heaven, Beatrice contrasts St. Gregory's arrangement of the Angelic Orders with that of Dionysius:

"Ma Gregorio da lui poi si divise."

(*Par.* XXVIII. 133.)

In the Heaven of Saturn, St. Benedict, the founder of the great Benedictine Order, tells Dante that it was he who founded the Monastery of Monte Cassino and planted the Christian Faith, where formerly the Ancients had worshipped Apollo and Diana, and mentions two of his followers, one of whom, San Romoalda, was an Italian:

"Quel monte a cui Cassino e nella costa,  
Fu frequentato già in sulla cima  
Dalla gente ingannata e mal disposta.  
E quel son io che su vi portai prima

Lo nome di Colui, che in terra addusse  
La verità che tanto ci sublima.

\* \* \* \*

Qui è Maccario, qui è Romoaldo,  
Qui son li frati miei che dentro ai chiostri  
Fermâr li piedi e tennero il cor saldo.”

(*Par. XXII. 37-51.*)

On the Celestial Ladder, in the Heaven of Saturn (*Par. XXI. 43-135*), Dante converses with the spirit of San Pier Damiano, Abbot of the Monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana in the Apennines, who, denouncing the dissolute lives of the brethren of his Order, tells Dante his name in the world, as well as that which he afterwards assumed in religion :

“Tra due liti d’Italia surgon sassi,  
E non molto distanti alla tua patria,  
Tanto che i tuoni assai suonan più bassi,  
E fanno un gibbo che si chiama Catria  
Disotto al quale è consecrato un ermo,  
Che suol esser disposto a sola latria.

\* \* \* \*

In quel loco fu’io Pier Damiano:  
E Pietro Peccator fui nella casa  
Di nostra Donna in sul lito Adriano.”

(*Par. XXI. 106-123.*)

When Dante reaches the Heaven of the Sun (*Par. X. 82 et seq.*) he is accosted by the twelve great Theologians, and St. Thomas Aquinas names the Theologians and Philosophers that compose the Heavenly Garland :

“Io fui degli agni della santa greggia  
Che Domenico mena per cammino,  
U’ben s’impingua se non si vaneggia.

\* \* \* \*

. . io Thomas d’Aquino.”

(*Par. X. 94-99.*)

In *Par. XI.*, St. Thomas Aquinas, himself a Dominican, contrasts the virtues of the two famous founders of Orders, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic :

“L’un fu tutto serafico in ardore,  
L’altro per sapienza in terra fue  
Di cherubica luce uno splendore.”  
(*Par. XI. 37-39.*)

St. Thomas Aquinas then relates the life of St. Francis, and after describing the situation of his birthplace, Assisi on the slope of Monte Subasio, near Perugia, he relates how from it there uprose on the world a sun (St. Francis) which shone with a radiance unknown in Europe, like the real sun when it rises from the Ganges (*i.e.*, the Far East).

So great was the piety of St. Francis that he wooed Poverty as a lover woos his mistress, and so incurred the hostility of his wealthy father, Pietro Bernardone. He took her as his bride, her, who for eleven hundred years had remained despised and rejected since the death of her first Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, upon whose cross she had mounted when He was nailed to it, while our Lord's mother remained at its foot :

“Si che, dove Maria rimase giuso,  
Ella con Cristo salse sulla croce.”  
(*Par. XI. 71, 72.*)

Other men of distinction joined him as barefooted friars, for the world was so edified at the example of St. Francis,

“Tanto che il venerabile Bernardo (*di Quintavalle*)  
Si scalzò prima . . .  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Scalzasi Egidio, scalzasi Silvestro,  
Dietro allo sposo (*St. Francis*) ; si la  
sposa (*Poverty*) piace.”  
(*Par. XI. 79-84.*)

After that the Franciscan Order had been granted provisional approval from Pope Innocent III. it received full confirmation from Pope Honorius III.

Subsequently to a mission to the Saracens in 1219, St. Francis retired to the monastery of Alvernia, where he received the holy *stigmata*, the third and final seal of the Order, and soon after died :

“ Reddisi al frutto dell' itolica erba :  
 Nel crudo sasso intra Tevero ed Arno  
 Da Cristo prese l'ultimo sigillo,  
 Che le sue membra due anni portâro.”  
 (Par. XI. 105-117.)

In the Heavenly Garland, in the Sphere of the Sun, St. Bonaventura, a Franciscan, sings the praises of St. Dominic :

“ Io son la vita Bonaventura  
 Da Bagnoregio.”  
 (Par. XII. 127, 128.)

He also names St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, Aelius Donatus, the grammarian, and Joachim, the Abbot of Celico in Calabria, celebrated for his prophetic powers :

“ Anselmo, e quel Donato  
 Ch'alla prim'arte [*Grammar*] degnò por la mano :  
 . . . e lucemi da lato  
 Il Calabrese abate Gioacchino,  
 Di spirito profetico dotato.”  
 (Par. XII. 137-141.)

Two learned ecclesiastics were mentioned by St. Thomas Aquinas in *Par. X.*, the Benedictine monk Gratian, and the celebrated Peter Lombard, the *Magister Sententiarum* :

“ Quell'altro fiammeggiare esce del riso  
 Di Grazian . . .



L'altro . . .

Quel Piero fu, che con la poverella  
Offerse a Santa Chiesa suo tesoro."

(*Par. X.* 103-108.)

Only one more (reputed) Saint remains unrecorded, and that is Pier Pettinagno, a holy hermit of great repute, who had been a seller of combs at Siena, where even to this day he is venerated as a Saint. In the Second Cornice of Purgatory, among the Envious, Sapia of Siena tells Dante that it was through Pier Pettinagno's intercessions only that her soul was saved. She says she longed for peace with God at the extremity of her life:

"ed ancor non sarebbe  
Lo mio dover per penitenza scemo,  
Se ciò non fosse che a memoria m'ebbe  
Pier Pettinagno in sue sante orazioni."

(*Purg. XIII.* 125-128.)

#### POPES AND CARDINALS

The first Pope, who is alluded to, though indirectly, in the *Inferno*, is Pope Celestine V., whom Dante would consider the very reverse of a great Italian, and against whom he entertained an especial grudge, because from his weakness in abdicating the Papacy he gave place to Dante's bitter enemy, Cardinal Caetani, who became Pope as Boniface VIII. This shade, supposed to be Pope Celestine, is the very first whom Dante describes on entering Outer Hell among the abject crowd of the Feeble and Pusillanimous, "che visser senza infamia e senza lodo" (*Inf. III.* 36), and who are not even allowed to cross the Styx into Hell proper. Dante recognises Celestine:

"Vidi e conobbi l'ombra di colui  
Che fece per viltà lo gran rifiuto."  
(*Ibid.* 59, 60.)

The monkish writers held up Celestine's abdication as a noble example of Christian humility; but most commentators and modern historians consider it was (as Dean Milman writes) a cry of passionate feebleness to be released from an insupportable burden.

Of Boniface VIII. more anon.

The Martyr Popes Linus, Cletus, Sixtus I., Pius I., Calixtus I., Urban I., are mentioned together by St. Peter in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars, as having shed their blood after much weeping :

“ Non fu la sposa di CRISTO allevata  
 Del sangue mio, di Lin, di quel di Cleto,  
 Per esser ad acquisto d'oro usata ;  
 Ma per acquisto d'esto viver lieto  
 E Sisto e Pio e Calisto ed Urbano  
 Sparser lo sangue dopo molto fieto.”  
 (Par. XXVII. 40-45.)

In the description of Nicholas III. in Hell (*Inf.* XIX.) among the Popes punished for Simony, and that of Adrian V. in Purgatory (*Purg.* XIX.) undergoing penance for Avarice, we have one of those felicitous contrasts of which Dante is so fond. In Hell, in the Third *Bolgia* of *Malebolge*, Dante is carried by Virgil to the place where the wicked Pope Nicholas Orsini is being punished, and stands over him like a friar confessing an assassin about to be buried alive :

“ Io stava come il frate che confessa  
 Lo perfido assassin.”  
 (*Inf.* XIX. 49, 50.)

In Purgatory, on the Fifth Cornice, Dante finds the good Adrian V. among the other Avaricious, prostrate with his face to the ground, bound hand and foot, with his back turned towards Heaven. So too here has Dante



to stoop to converse with this Pope, by permission of Virgil :

“Poi ch'io potei di me fare a mio senno,  
Trassimi sopra quella creatura,  
Le cui parole pria notar mi fenno.”  
(*Purg.* XIX. 88-90.)

In Hell Nicholas tells Dante :

“Sappi ch'io fui vestito del gran manto.”  
(*Inf.* XIX. 69.)

In Purgatory Adrian says :

“Un mese e poco più prova'io come  
Pesa il gran manto a chi dal fango il guarda.”  
(*Purg.* XIX. 103, 104.)

After hearing Nicholas's discreditable autobiography, Dante bursts out into a storm of righteous indignation, which he professes to keep within due bounds out of respect to Nicholas's pontifical dignity :

“E se non fosse, che ancor lo mi vieta  
La riverenza delle somme chiavi,  
Che tu tenesti nella vita lieta,  
I'userei parole ancor più gravi.”  
(*Inf.* XIX. 100-103.)

He addresses Pope Nicholas with the ordinary *tu*, but as soon as he hears from Adrian that he was a Pope, he at once changes his speech to the then more reverential *voi*, and humbly bends the knee in homage to his high dignity. The good Pope indignantly refuses any such veneration :

“ Drizza le gambe, levati su, frate,  
 . . . non errar, conservo sono  
 Teco e con gli altri ad una potestate.”  
 (*Purg.* XIX. 133-135.)

We have already noticed Farinata degli Uberti's allusion to *il Cardinale* in torment with himself and the Emperor Frederick II. This is Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, a great Ghibelline in the time of King Manfred. He was generally termed *the* Cardinal, because he had the greatest influence at the Papal Court. According to Dante's son, Pietro, he was often heard to express a doubt as to whether he had a soul or not, but, if he had, he was sure he had lost it many times over on account of his excessive love for the Ghibelline party. This Cardinal's nephew was the notorious Ruggieri degli Ubaldini della Pila, Archbishop of Pisa, son of Ubaldino della Pila. By his treachery Count Ugolino, with his sons and grandsons, was imprisoned and starved to death. Dante finds him among the Traitors in the ice in *Tolomea* as betrayers of associates, while Count Ugolino, on the dividing line between the two divisions of Cocytus, is himself in *Antenora*, among the betrayers of their country. The two are frozen in close contiguity, and the Count is gnawing his betrayer's head :

“ . . . vidi due ghiacciati in una buca,  
 Sì che l'un capo all'altro era cappello :  
 E come il pan per fame si manduca,  
 Così il sopran li denti all'altro pose  
 Là 've il cervel s'aggiunge alla nuca.”  
 (*Inf.* XXXII. 125-129.)

Of Count Ugolino we shall speak later.

In the Heaven of the Sun St. Bonaventura, in speaking of St. Dominic, mentions Cardinal *Ostiense*. This was Enrico di Susa, a great canonical jurist, who published a commentary on “The Decretals,” one of



the principal text-books in the law schools. (*Par.* XII. 82, 83.)

I have left Boniface VIII. as the last to be considered by us among the Popes and Cardinals. Throughout the *Divina Commedia* Dante shows bitter hatred against that Pontiff, to whom he attributed his exile and subsequent life of adversity. In the Third *Bolgia* of *Malebolge*, among the Simonist Popes, Nicholas III., who takes Dante for Boniface, taunts the latter with his avarice, and the fraud by which he had obtained the chief rule over that beauteous lady, the Church :

“ Se' tu sì tosto di quell'aver sazio,  
Per lo qual non temesti tórre a inganno  
La bella Donna, e poi di farne strazio.”  
(*Inf.* XIX. 55-57.)

In the Eighth *Bolgia* Dante represents Count Guido da Montefeltro as terming Pope Boniface (*Inf.* XXVII. 83)

“ Lo Principe de'nuovi Farisei,”

and bitterly censures his unpriestly conduct :

“ Nè sommo offizio, nè ordini sacri  
Guardò in sè, nè in me quel capestro  
Che solea far li suoi cinti più macri.”  
(*Ibid.* 91-93.)

Guido relates the Pope's wicked persuasions, and how at last he yielded to them, not daring to refuse :

“ E dissi: ‘ Padre, da che tu mi lavi  
Di quel peccato, ov'io mo cader deggio,  
Lunga promessa coll'attender corto  
Ti farà trionfar nell'alto seggio.’”  
(*Ibid.* 108-111.)

In the Heaven of the Sun St. Bonaventura distinguishes between the blameless Papal dignity and the guilty dignitary on the Papal Seat, Boniface VIII.:

“ . . . colui che siede, che traligna.”  
(*Par.* XII. 90.)

The fault did not lie with the Papal Throne and Office, but with its then unworthy occupant, who did not exercise his mission of Christian love, as was his sacred duty.

In the Heaven of the Fixed Stars St. Peter utters against Boniface a denunciation so terrible, that the whole Heaven turns red with anger:

“ Quegli ch’usurpa in terra il loco mio,  
Il loco mio, il loco mio, che vaca  
Nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio.  
Fatto ha del cimitero mio cloaca  
Del sangue e della puzza, onde il perverso,  
Che cadde di quassù, laggiù si placa.”  
(*Par.* XXVII. 22-27.)

In the Empyrean Heaven Beatrice alludes to the thwarting by Pope Clement V. of the very enterprise to which Dante had invited Henry VII. of Luxembourg, but retribution awaits Pope Clement, and when he is thrust down into his hot stove among the Simonists, he will cause Boniface of Anagni to sink still further down:

“ E farà quel d’Anagni entrar più giuso.”  
(*Par.* XXX. 148.)

Notwithstanding his private animosity against Boniface, Dante sees with the eyes of a Catholic the indignities to which he was to be subjected at Alagna (now Anagni) by Guillaume de Nogaret and Sciarra della Colonna, by order of Philip the Fair, in 1303, and from the mortifica-

tion of which he died shortly afterwards at Rome. Dante viewed with the utmost abhorrence Boniface's treatment by the emissaries of Philip. No personal enmity could make him forget that, as Pope, Boniface was the Vicar of Christ. (*Purg.* XX. 86-90.)

## RULERS

The earliest Latin Ruler mentioned in the *Divina Commedia* is Julius Cæsar :

“ Cesare armato con occhi grifagni.”  
(*Inf.* IV. 123.)

“ Colui ch'a tutto il mondo fe'paura.”  
(*Par.* XI. 69.)

In the Flowery Valley Virgil tells Sordello that his bones had been buried by order of Augustus Cæsar before the mountain had been chosen as the site of Purgatory :

“ Prima che a questo monte fosser vòlte  
L'anime degne di salire a Dio,  
Fur l'ossa mie per Ottavian sepolte.”  
(*Purg.* VII. 4-6.)

Among the sculptured examples of humility in the First Cornice of Purgatory is one representing the story of Trajan and the poor widow :

“ Quivi era storiata l'alta gloria  
Del roman principato, il cui valore  
Mosse Gregorio alla sua gran vittoria :  
Io dico di Traiano imperadore ;  
Ed una vedovella gli era al freno.”  
(*Purg.* X. 73-77.)



In the Heaven of Mars Cacciaguida speaks of the Conti Guidi in connection with their sale to the Florentines in 1254 of their famous castle of Montemurlo near Pistoja :

“ Sariansi Montemurlo ancor de' Conti.”  
(*Par.* XVI. 64.)

He styles them *the* Counts.

Cacciaguida also predicts that at the Court of the Scaligeri at Verona Dante shall find munificent hospitality from Bartolommeo della Scala, “the great Lombard,” after his exile in 1303.

“Lo primo tuo rifugio e il primo ostello  
Sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo,  
Che in sulla Scala porta il santo uccello,  
Che in te avrà sì benigno riguardo,  
Che del fare e del chiedere, tra voi due,  
Fia prima quel che tra gli altri è più tardo.”  
(*Par.* XVII. 70-75.)

Cacciaguida adds that at the Court of Verona Dante will become acquainted with Bartolommeo's third brother, Can Grande, then only nine years of age, but destined afterwards to be so renowned :

“Non se ne son le genti ancora accorte  
Per la novella età ; che pur nove anni  
Son queste rote intorno di lui torte.  
\* \* \*  
Parran faville della sua virtute  
In non curar d'argento nè d'affanni.”  
(*Par.* XVII. 79-84.)

Many think he is the mysterious personage alluded to in *Inf.* I. 101, as the *Veltro*.



In the Flowery Valley in Ante-Purgatory Dante sees the shades of two illustrious Rulers. One is the ill-fated William VII., surnamed Longsword, Marquis of Monferrato. His rebellious subjects in Alessandria took him prisoner, and exposed him to public view in an iron cage for seventeen months, subject to the jeers and insults of the lowest populace, until death ended his sufferings in 1292:

“ Guglielmo Marchese,  
Per cui ed Alessandria e la sua guerra  
Fa pianger Monferrato e Canavese.”  
(*Purg.* VII. 134-136.)

The other shade is Conrad II., Marquis of the illustrious family of Malaspina, of which Dante speaks as one of the most noble descent and glorious reputation even in his time. I may remark that the male line continues to this day, and the present Marchese Malaspina has quite recently entertained the Dante Society of Florence at his residence, Castelnuovo, in the Lunigiana.

The magnificent lines which detail Conrad's conversation with Dante cannot be curtailed; the Shade (*l'ombra*) speaks:

“ ‘ Se la lucerna che ti mena in alto  
Trovei nel tuo arbitrio tanta cera,  
Quant'è mestiero infino al sommo smalto,’  
Cominciò ella; ‘ Se novella vera  
Di Valdimacra, o di parte vicina  
Sai, dilla a me, che già grande là era.

Chiamato fui Corrado Malaspina:  
Non son l'antico, ma di lui discesi:  
A'miei portai l'amor che qui raffina.’

‘ O,’ diss'io lui, ‘ per li vostri paesi  
Giammai non fui; ma dove si dimora  
Per tutta Europa, che'ei non sien palesi?’

La fama che la vostra casa onora,  
 Grida i signori e grida la contrada,  
 Sì che ne sa chi non vi fu ancora.  
 Ed io vi giuro, s'io di sopra vada,  
 Che vostra gente onrata non si sfregia  
 Del pregio della borsa e della spada.

Uso e natura sì la privilegia,  
 Che, perchè il capo reo \* lo mondo torca,  
 Sola va dritta, e il mal cammin dispregia.'"  
 (*Purg.* VIII. 112-132.)

Morcèllo Malaspina, to whom the robber Vanni Fucci, in the Seventh *Bolgia* of *Malebolge* alludes, was first cousin to Conrad II. He is spoken of as the

“Vapor di val di Magra,”

who upon the plain of Pescia (*campo Piceno*) will inflict a defeat upon the *Bianchi* Guelphs. (*Inf.* XXIV. 145-148.)

In the Eighth *Bolgia* of *Malebolge*, when Dante is asked by Guido da Montefeltro whether the Romagnoles are at peace or war, he replies :

“Romagna tua non è, e non fu mai  
 Senza guerra ne'cor de'suoi tiranni;  
 Ma 'n palese nessuna or vi lasciai.”  
 (*Inf.* XXVII. 37-39.)

He then describes the beneficent rule of the Da Polenta Eagle; who covers Ravenna and Cervia as a bird does its own brood; whereas by the rapacious claws of the lion of the Ordelaffi at Forlì, and by the pitiless fangs of the Malatesta mastiff at Rimini, a detestable tyranny is as plainly indicated. Dante is said to have acted as

\* Meaning Boniface VIII.

Secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi during the first year of his exile.

Maghinardo Pagani da Susinana is mentioned as ruling over Faenza and Imola, and as continually changing sides between Guelphs and Ghibellines :

“ Che muta parte dalla state al verno.”  
(*Inf.* XXVII. 51.)

#### WARRIORS

Dante makes constant allusions to Scipio Africanus, the great Roman General who defeated Hannibal at the battle of Zama in B.C. 185 :

“ l’alta provvidenza, che con Scipio  
Difese a Roma la gloria del mondo.”  
(*Par.* XXVII. 61, 62.)

We have already alluded to Cacciaguida, the Crusader, Dante’s great-great-grandfather, who was killed in the Second Crusade, in 1147. He announces his relationship to Dante thus :

“ O fronda mia, in che io compiacemmi  
Pure aspettando, io fui la tua radice . . .  
. . . Quel da cui si dice  
Tua cognazion . . .  
Mio figlio fu, e tuo bisavo fue.”  
(*Par.* XV. 88-94.)

After sketching the simple and peaceful ways of the citizens of Florence in his time, he adds :

“ A così riposato, a così bello  
Viver di cittadini, a così fida  
Cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello,



Maria mi diè, chiamata in alte grida,  
 E nell'antico vostro Batisteo  
 Insieme fui Cristiano e Cacciaguida."  
 (*Ibid.* 130-135.)

The description of the haughty Farinata degli Uberti, uprisen in his fiery tomb as Dante approaches him is very fine :

" L'avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto ;  
 Ed ei s'ergera col petto e colla fronte,  
 Come avesse lo inferno in gran dispetto."  
 (*Inf.* X. 34-36.)

And his perfect indifference to the appearance as well as to the disappearance of Cavalcante Cavalcanti :

" Ma quell'alto magnanimo, a cui posta  
 Restato m'era, non mutò aspetto,  
 Nè mosse collo, nè piegò sua costa."  
 (*Ibid.* 73-75.)

Of Farinata we will only add how, when Florence was lying prostrate at the feet of the Ghibellines after the battle of Montaperti (1260), that great-souled patriot saved it from being razed to the ground, as he tells Dante :

" Ma fu'io sol colà, dove sofferto  
 Fu per ciascun di torre via Fiorenza,  
 Colui che la difesi a viso aperto."  
 (*Ibid.* 91-98.)

Provenzano Salvani, a proud and haughty Ghibelline, was leader of the Sienese when they were defeated by the Florentines at Colle, and, being taken prisoner, was beheaded on the field of battle. A striking anecdote

records how, when he was in the full plenitude of his power, to save his friend Vineia, whose life depended on a ransom of 10,000 florins being paid to Charles of Anjou by a certain day, he humbled himself to beg the money in the Piazza del Campo at Siena :

“ Quando vivea più glorioso . . .  
 Liberamente nel campo di Siena,  
 Ogni vergogna deposta s'affisse :  
 E lì, per trar l'amico suo di pena  
 Che sostenea nella prigion di Carlo,  
 Si condusse a tremar per ogni vena.”  
 (*Purg.* XI. 133-138.)

Three Florentines on the Burning Sand entreat Dante to speak with them, and as their penalty obliges them to keep moving, they form a ring, and run round and round as they talk. Notwithstanding their crimes, they were great men in Florence. These were Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, and Jacopo Rusticucci. Dante assures them of his respect :

“ Di vostra terra sono ; e sempre mai  
 L'opre di voi e gli onorati nomi  
 Con affezion ritrassi ed ascoltai.”  
 (*Inf.* XVI. 58-60.)

We have already noticed the contiguity of Archbishop Ruggieri to Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, the former being the Ghibelline, the latter the Guelph leader in Pisa in 1288. In that year these two had made a league to turn Nino de' Visconti out of Pisa, but disagreeing among themselves, strife arose between them ; Ruggieri captured Ugolino, imprisoned him in the Torre della Fame, with two sons and two grandsons, and had them starved to death in 1289. Ugolino tells Dante of the barbarities they underwent :



“Or ti dirò perch'io son tal vicino,  
 Che per l'effetto de'suo'ma'pensieri,  
 Fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso  
 E poscia morto, dir non e mestieri.  
 Però quel che non puoi aver inteso,  
 Ciò è come la morte mia fu cruda,  
 Udirai, e saprai se m'ha offeso.”

(*Inf.* XXXIII. 15-21.)

Jacopo del Cassero, a Guelph of Fano, was Podestà of Bologna in 1296. Azzo VIII. of Este, having been thwarted by him in his designs upon Bologna, had Jacopo assassinated by his bravoës at Oriaco among the lagoons in the Venetian territory as he was journeying to Milan :

“Corsi al palude, e le cannuce e il brago  
 M'impigliâr si, ch'io caddi, e li vid'io  
 Delle mie vene farsi in terra lago.”

(*Purg.* V. 82-84.)

The contrast between the fate of Count Guido da Montefeltro, the father (*Inf.* XXVII.), and Buonconte da Montefeltro, the son (*Purg.* V.), is singularly striking. The father, Guido, one of the most astute of statesmen, and the greatest military leader of his time, lost his soul for one word of fraudulent counsel, given to Pope Boniface VIII. :

“Francesco venne poi, com'io fui morto  
 Per me ; ma uno de' neri Cherubini  
 Gli disse : ‘ Non portar, non mi far torto.  
 Venir se ne dee giù tra' miei meschini,  
 Perchè diede il consiglio frodolente.”

(*Inf.* XXVII. 112-116.)

The son, Buonconte, who commanded the Ghibelline forces at the battle of Campaldino, wounded in the

throat, unable to speak, dragged himself to the little river Archiano, and as he sank down in his death agony on the river bank, he made with his arms a Cross on his breast, and his lips just breathed the name of Mary, and so saved his soul :

“L'Angel di Dio mi prese, e quel d'inferno  
 Gridava : 'O tu del ciel, perchè mi privi ?  
 Tu te ne porti di costui l'eterno  
 Per una lagrimetta che il mi toglie.”  
 (*Purg.* V. 104-107.)

It is noticeable in both these episodes that it is the Demon alone who speaks.

Corso de' Donati, the leader of the Black Guelphs (*Neri*), is not mentioned by name in the *Divina Commedia*, but Forese, his brother, in speaking of the unhappy condition of Florence, lays the blame for it on Corso, only alluding to him as

“quei che più n'ha colpa.”  
 (*Purg.* XXIV. 82.)

He foretells his death, saying that he can see him fallen from his horse and dragged by the stirrup :

“a coda d'una bestia tratto  
 In vêr la valle, ovi mai non si scolpa.  
 La bestia ad ogni passo va più ratto,  
 Crescendo sempre fin ch'ella il percuote,  
 E lascia il corpo vilmente disfatto.”  
 (*Ibid.* 83-87.)

Although Corso was one of Dante's very worst enemies, yet, as he was a near kinsman of Dante's wife Gemma, Dante is careful to avoid any disparaging mention of his wife's family name.



## STATESMEN AND CITIZENS

On their arrival on the sea-shore of Purgatory, Dante and Virgil encounter Cato of Utica, who in life was the enthusiastic champion of Roman liberty. As a Pagan he should have been placed in *Limbo*, as a Suicide he should be growing as a tree in the Forest of Woe in the Seventh Circle of Hell. But Dante, like all the writers of antiquity, and many of the Fathers of the Church, could not find it in his heart to relegate Cato to Hell, but placed him at the Entrance of Ante-Purgatory as the Guardian of the whole Mountain, a post, as Dante thought, worthy of his great dignity :

“ Vidi presso di me un veglio solo,  
 Degno di tanta riverenza in vista,  
 Che più non dee a padre alcun figliuolo.”  
 (*Purg.* I. 31-33.)

Boëthius, the author of *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, was held in great esteem by Theodoric, King of the Goths, who appointed him his *Magister Officiorum*, but in later years, having given ear to the accusations of jealous courtiers, he imprisoned him in the Castle of Pavia, where he died after cruel sufferings. Dante derived the greatest consolation after the death of Beatrice from the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boëthius, and the *De Amicitia* of Cicero. The latter is only alluded to once in the *Divina Commedia* as Tullius :

“ Tullio e Lino e Seneca morale.”  
 (*Inf.* IV. 141.)

In the Heaven of the Sun, St. Thomas Aquinas points out Boëthius as :

“ L'anima santa, che il mondo fallace  
 Fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode.”  
 (*Par.* X. 125, 126.)



There is a marked parallel in the career and the fate of Boëthius with that of Pier delle Vigne, the great Chancellor and personal friend of the Emperor Frederick II. Piero was a Jurist, deeply versed in the Roman and Civil Law, and a poet of no mean merit. Like Boëthius with Theodoric, Pier delle Vigne was traduced by the envious courtiers, and like him his Lord turned against him and cast him into prison. Pier, moreover, was blinded (*abbacinato*). They were unlike in their deaths, for Boëthius endured to the end, while Pier took his own life in prison. Growing as a tree among the Suicides in the Forest of Woe, he tells Dante:

“Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi  
Del cor di Federico . . .  
Fede portai al glorioso officio.” . . .

But slander turned the Emperor against him, and then:

“L’animo mio per disdegnoso gusto,  
Credendo col morir fuggir disdegno,  
Ingiusto fece me contra me giusto.”  
(*Inf.* XIII. 58-72.)

Bellincion Berti dei Ravignani was one of the most notable and honourable citizens of Florence, of whom Dante's ancestor, Cacciaguida, is made to speak with profound respect, as an exemplification of the modest demeanour and unassuming garb of the noblest and greatest men in Florence in Cacciaguida's days:

“Bellincion Berti vid'io andar cinto  
Di cuoio ed osso;”  
(*Par.* XV. 112, 113.)

and—

“i Ravignani, ond'è disceso  
Il Conte Guido, e qualunque del nome  
Dell'alto Bellincione ha poscia preso.”  
(*Par. XVI. 97-99.*)

Bellincione's daughter, known as *la buona Gualdrada* (*Inf. XVI. 37*), was the wife of the Count Guido the Elder, known before his marriage as Guido Beisangue, one of the Conti Guidi alluded to by Cacciaguida in connection with their lost castle of Montemurlo.

Dante puts into the mouth of Cacciaguida a bitter cry of lament at the discord brought into Florence by Buondelmonte dei Buondelmonti, who by his faithless desertion of his affianced bride, a maiden of the noble family of the Amidei, had occasioned his own assassination, which was the origin of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions in Florence:

“La casa di che nacque il vostro feto,  
Per lo giusto disdegno che v'ha morti,  
E pose fine al vostro viver lieto,  
Era onorata ed essa e suoi consorti.  
O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti  
Le nozze sue per gli altrui conforti.”  
(*Par. XVI. 136-141.*)

Nino de' Visconti of Pisa was nephew of the famous Count Ugolino della Gherardesca. He was Justiciary of Gallura, in the Island of Sardinia. Nino was by his family a Guelph, and became chief of that party at Pisa, just as his uncle, Count Ugolino, was the chief of the Pisan Ghibellines.

Dante's interview with Nino in the Happy Valley of Ante-Purgatory is related in great detail:



“Vêr me si fece, ed io vêr lui mi fei :  
 Giudice Nin gentil, quanto mi piacque,  
 Quando ti vidi non esser tra i rei!  
 Nullo bel salutar tra noi si tacque,” &c.  
 (*Purg.* VIII. 52-55.)

Further on in the interview Nino speaks with much annoyance of his widow's remarriage with one of the Visconti of Milan, whose crest was a viper, whereas his own was a cock :

“Non le farà sì bella sepoltura  
 La vipera che il Milanese accampa (*i.e.,*  
*displays on his shield*),  
 Com'avria fatto il gallo di Gallura.”  
 (*Ibid.* 79-81.)

On the Sixth Cornice of Purgatory, among the emaciated penitents expiating the sin of Gluttony, Dante encounters the spirit of Forese de' Donati, a kinsman of Dante's wife Gemma, and his own intimate friend, though certain vituperative sonnets that had passed between them prove that their friendship was not uninterrupted.

Of Forese's brother Corso we have already spoken, and later on we shall speak of his beautiful and virtuous sister, Piccarda. Dante is only able to recognise Forese by his voice :

“Mai non l'avrei riconosciuto al viso ;  
 Ma nella voce sua . . .  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 E ravvisai la faccia di Forese.”  
 (*Purg.* XXIII. 43-48.)

He tells Dante that the intercessions of his saintly wife, Nella, have been efficacious in hastening his pro-

gress on the Cornices of Purgatory, there to drink the sweet wormwood of penance :

“ Si tosto m’ha condotto  
A ber lo dolce assenzio de’ martiri  
La Nella mia col pianger suo dritto,  
Con suoi preghi devoti e con sospiri,” &c.  
(*Ibid.* 85-90.)

In the thick smoke on the Third Cornice of Purgatory, in which, unseen, the Wrathful suffer torment, Dante is addressed by the spirit of Marco Lombardo, when Boccaccio calls *Marco di Ca’ dei Lombardi da Vinegia*, about whose identity there is considerable uncertainty.

Of himself Marco says :

“ Lombardo fui, e fui chiamato Marco,  
Del mondo seppi,” &c.  
(*Purg.* XVI. 46, 47.)

Marco mentions three good men still existing in Lombardy, whose names are in our list of Great Italian citizens :

“ Ben v’èn tre vecchi ancora in cui rampogna  
L’antica età la nuova, e par lor tardo  
Che Dio a miglior vita li ripogna ;  
Corrado da Palazzo, et il buon Gherardo,  
E Guido da Castel, che me’si noma  
Francescamente il semplice Lombardo.”  
(*Ibid.* 121-126.)

Corrado da Castello, a noble of the State of Brescia, was Captain of the people at Florence in 1279. Gherardo di Camino, Lord of Treviso, was surnamed *the good*. Guido da Castello de’ Roberti di Reggio, was prudent and upright, wise in counsel, of a simple life, and was a kind host to Dante.



POETS, WRITERS, MUSICIANS, PAINTERS, AND  
PHYSICIANS

The following poets we have mentioned in the early part of the lecture: (1) Horace; (2) Ovid; (3) Lucan; (4) Guido Cavalcanti; and the following painters: (1) Oderisi d'Agobbio; (2) Cimabue; (3) Giotto. Of writers we have quoted Dante's mention of Cicero as *Tullio*.

Virgil, as the poet of the Roman Empire, appealed to Dante with an authority hardly inferior to that of Holy Writ, ~~and in fact Dante quotes from Virgil pretty nearly as often as he does from the Bible.~~ During the course of the journey described from the 79th line of the first Canto of the *Inferno*, until his farewell to Dante on the top of the stairway leading from the summit of Purgatory to the Terrestrial Paradise, he is never absent; and even after that point, he is a silent observer of the Mystical Procession through the Divine Forest, until at the appearance of Beatrice, he is lost to Dante's view. He is generally considered to represent Human Reason, and is Dante's loving and tender guide through Hell and Purgatory; but when Beatrice, allegorically representing Divine Science, comes upon the scene, Human Reason can no longer fill the first place as a Guide. In the Middle Ages Virgil was generally looked upon with superstitious awe as a Wizard and a Magician. Dante thus addresses him at their first meeting in the Dark Forest on the Mountain:

“Or se'tu quel Virgilio, e quella fonte  
Che spande di parlar sì largo fiume?”

\* \* \* \*

O degli altri poeti onore e lume,  
Vagliami il lungo studio e il grande amore,  
Che m'ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.



Tu se' lo mio maestro e il mio autore :  
 Tu se' solo colui, da cui io tolsi  
 Lo bello stile che m'ha fatto onore.'  
 (*Inf.* I. 79-87.)

His disappearance causes Dante deep sorrow :

"Ma Virgilio n'avea lasciati scemi  
 Di sè, Virgilio dolcissimo padre,  
 Virgilio a cui per mia salute die'mi."  
 (*Purg.* XXX. 49-51.)

The Roman poet Publius Papinius Statius, who was born at Naples, must not be confounded with Lucius Statius, the rhetorician of Toulouse. This very error is put into the mouth of Statius by Dante :

"Nel tempo che il buon Tito con l'aiuto  
 Del sommo Rege vendicò le fora,  
 Ond'uscì il sangue per Giuda venduto  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Era io di là . . .  
 Famoso assai, ma non con fede ancora  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 . . . Tolosano, a sè mi trasse Roma,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma :  
 Cantai di Tebe, e poi del grande Achille."  
 (*Purg.* XXI. 82-93.)

Brunetto Latini, though not, as some have affirmed, the personal teacher of Dante, afforded him much instruction by his writings. Tiraboschi writes that though Brunetto did not keep a school, it is probable that he was always willing to give literary help to the younger writers who sought his counsel. His greatest prose work was the *Livres dou Tresor*, a sort of Encyclopædia of

the learning of the time. Dante on recognising him with some difficulty, amid the flames falling upon him, exclaims :

“ . . . Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto ? ”  
(*Inf.* XV. 30.)

Brunetto predicts Dante's distinguished career :

. . . “ Se tu segui la tua stella,  
Non puoi fallire al glorioso porto,  
Se ben m'accorsi nella vita bella:  
E s'io non fossi sì per tempo morto.  
Veggendo il cielo a te così benigno,  
Dato t'avrei all'opera conforto.”  
(*Ibid.* 55-60.)

As he runs off he says :

“ Siati raccomandato il mio Tesoro  
Nel quale io vivo ancora.”  
(*Ibid.* 119-120.)

Guido Guinicelli (or Guinizelli) was the father of Italian literature, and the most important of the poets, who, before the time of Dante, wrote in the *lingua volgare*.

Dante converses with him on the last Cornice of Purgatory where the Sensual are in flames in the *ultima tortura*. On Dante questioning the shade, Guido tells him :

“ Son Guido Guinizelli, e già mi purgo  
Per ben dolermi prima ch'all'estremo.”  
(*Purg.* XXVI. 91, 92.)

Among the Gluttonous on the Sixth Cornice of Purgatory, Forese points out Bonagiunta da Lucca, a poet,

according to Nannucci, of some celebrity at the time of Dante's death, and according to Benvenuto, a splendid orator in his mother tongue :

“Questi (e mostrò col dito) è Bonagiunta,  
Bonagiunta da Lucca.”

(*Purg.* XXIV. 19, 20.)

Bonagiunta, in commending the purer style of Dante's sonnets, confesses the hindrance of the older style that held back himself and two other poets whom he names :

“O frate, issa veggio . . . il nodo  
Che il Notaro, e Guittone e me ritenne  
Di qua dal dolce stil nuovo.”

(*Ibid.* 55-57.)

*Il Notaro* was the name by which Jacopo da Lentino, a Sicilian poet, was known. Fra Guittone d'Arezzo was the first to bring the Italian sonnet into the perfect form which it has since preserved, and he left behind him the earliest specimens of Italian letter-writing.

There are two Musicians mentioned in the *Commedia*, Casella of Pistoia, musician and singer ; and Sordello, a distinguished poet and troubadour. Of Casella but little is known, save that he was a great personal friend of Dante, and set his sonnets to music. Dante, on the shores of Purgatory, where the Angel has just landed Casella, asks him to sing :

“ . . . Se nuova legge non ti toglie  
Memoria o uso all'amoroso canto,  
Che mi solea quetar tutte mie voglie,  
Di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto  
L'anima mia, che con la sua persona  
Venendo qui, è affannata tanto.”

(*Purg.* II. 106-111.)



And Casella complies by singing one of Dante's own sonnets.

As Dante is ascending the rocky heights of Ante-Purgatory, he and Virgil see the spirit of Sordello sitting apart by himself in a lion-like attitude :

“Venimmo a lei : O anima Lombarda,  
 Come ti stavi altera e disdegnosa  
 . . . solo sguardando  
 A guisa di leon quando si posa.”  
 (*Purg.* VI. 61-66.)

Benvenuto speaks of Sordello as *nobilis et prudens miles*, and says he had written a book called the *Thesaurus Thesaurorum*.

His *Planh* or *Complaint* on the death of Blacatz, and his *Sirventes* were much celebrated in his day. It was into Sordello's mouth that Dante places the indignant verses that conclude the Seventh Canto of the *Purgatorio*.

In the Heaven of the Sun, St. Bonaventura couples together the Decretalist, Enrico da Susa, and Taddeo. The latter is generally taken to be Taddeo d'Alterotto di Bologna, a medical man of great reputation who died in 1303.

The line is :

“Diretro ad Ostiense ed a Taddeo”  
 (*Par.* XII. 83),

and Pietro di Dante says that the passage means law and medicine.

#### WOMEN

St. Lucia of Syracuse, a noble Christian maiden, who lived in the time of Diocletian, is the patron saint of all who suffer from diseases of the eyes. Beatrice mentions her (*Inf.* II. 100) as one of the three heavenly ladies who are interested in Dante's salva-



tion; the Virgin Mary having summoned her to his assistance :

“ Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando,  
 . . . Or ha bisogno il tuo fedele  
 Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.

Lucia, nimica di ciascun crudele,  
 Si mosse, e venne al loco dov' io era.”  
 (*Inf.* II. 94-101.)

Santa Chiara (St. Clara), the countrywoman and contemporary of St. Francis of Assisi, adapted the rule of his Friars to her own sex, and founded the Order which bore her name. Of her Piccarda de' Donati, in the Heaven of the Moon, says :

“ Perfetta vita ed alto merto inciela  
 Donna più su . . . alla cui norma  
 Nel vostro mondo giù si veste e vela,

Perchè in fino al morir si vegghi e dorma  
 Con quello sposo ch'ogni voto accetta,  
 Che caritate a suo piacer conforma.”  
 (*Par.* III. 97-102.)

The great Empress Constance, one of the nuns torn from their vows in the Heaven of the Moon, was the youngest daughter of Roger II., King of Sicily. She was forcibly married to the Emperor Henry VI., and by him became the mother of the Emperor Frederick II. Dante, consistently with his family pride, after indicating the spirit the most exalted in worldly dignity, represents his wife's kinswoman Piccarda alone in companionship with that great personage :

“ Quest è la luce della gran Costanza,  
 Che del secondo vento di Soave  
 Generò il terzo, e l'ultima possanza.”  
 (*Ibid.* 118-120.)

Piccarda de' Donati was the sister of Corso and Forese, the latter of whom extols her virtues :

“La mia sorella, che tra bella e buona  
Non so qual fosse più, trionfa lieta  
Nell' alto Olimpo già di sua corona.”  
(*Purg.* XXIV. 13-15.)

In the third Canto of the *Paradiso*, Piccarda says of herself :

“Io fui nel mondo vergine sorella ;  
E se la mente tua ben mi riguarda,  
Non mi ti celerà esser più bella,  
  
Ma riconoscerai ch'io son Piccarda,  
Che posta qui con questi altri beati,  
Beata son in la spera più tarda.”  
(*Par.* III. 46-51.)

She was forcibly withdrawn from the Convent of Santa Chiara at Florence by her brother Corso, and compelled to wed one Rosellino della Tosa. She sums up her subsequent life :

“E Dio si sa qual poi mia vita fusi.”  
(*Ibid.* 108.)

Gualdrada, the daughter of Bellincion Berti de' Ravignani at Florence, was equally as distinguished for her surpassing beauty as for her maidenly modesty. The Emperor Otho IV. married her to Guido Beisangue de' Conti Guidi. They had several children, one of whom was the father of Guido Guerra, of whom Jacopo Rusticucci says :

“Nepote fu della buona Gualdrada :  
Guido Guerra ebbe nome.”  
(*Inf.* XVI. 37, 38.)

Giovanna, daughter of the Judge Nino Visconti, was the last descendant of the Judges of Gallura. She married Riccardo da Camino, Lord of Treviso, and was known as the Countess of Gallura. Nino entreats Dante to ask her for her intercessions on his behalf:

“Di’ a Giovanna mia, che per me chiami  
Là dove agli innocenti si risponde.”  
(*Purg.* VIII. 71, 72.)

In Ante-Purgatory, Pia, whom Benvenuto and the *Anonimo Fiorentino* represent as being of the Tolomei family of Siena, solicits Dante’s revival of her memory on his return to earth:—

“Ricorditi di me che son la Pia :  
Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma :  
Salsi colui che innanellata, pria  
Disposando, m’avea con la sua gemma.”  
(*Purg.* V. 133–136.)

Alagia de’ Fieschi, the niece of Pope Adrian V., was the daughter of Niccolò di Tedisio di Ugone de’ Fieschi. Pope Adrian mentions her as his sole relative surviving in the world :

“Nepote ho io di là ch’ha nome Alagia,  
Buona da sè, pur che la nostra casa  
Non faccia lei per esempio malvagia ;  
E questa sola di là m’è rimasa.”  
(*Purg.* XIX. 142–145.)

About the word *Gentucca* there has been a good deal of controversy, but the interpretation to be preferred is that which makes it a proper name. Buti calls her Madonna Gentucca di Rossimpelo of Lucca, with whom Dante, during his residence at Lucca, contracted a very warm, but virtuous, affection.



On the Sixth Cornice of Purgatory Bonagiunta of Lucca hints at this being likely to come to pass :

“Femmina è nata, e non porta ancor benda,  
 . . . che ti farà piacere  
 La mia città con questo antivedere.”  
 (*Purg.* XXIV. 43-45.)

Some of the old commentators think that Alagia de' Fieschi, mentioned above, is the *femmina* in question.

It is not necessary to repeat the well-known story of Francesca da Rimini, an episode in the *Divina Commedia* which will ever remain one of the most pathetic and touching passages that poet ever wrote. I will only quote the lines in which she confesses her love for Paolo Malatesta, and will draw a veil over the heartrending and deplorable sequel :

“Amor, che a cor gentil ratto s'apprende,  
 Prese costui della bella persona  
 Che mi fu tolta, e il modo ancor m'offende.  
 Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona,  
 Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,  
 Che come vedi, ancor non mi abbandona.”  
 (*Inf.* V. 100-105.)

I may perhaps assume that Matelda, “the great Countess of Tuscany,” a strong upholder of her own rights as well as those of the Papacy, may be the original of the Matelda, the *Donna soletta*, whom Dante encounters in the Terrestrial Paradise gathering flowers on the bank of the river Lethe. Virgil had then ceased to be Dante's guide and instructor. Matelda temporarily assumed that function, and conducted Dante to Beatrice. Matelda symbolised the active life, Beatrice the contemplative. She is named by the Seven Damsels who are leading Dante to the river Eunoë. On his asking what is the water before him, they answer :



“Prega Matelda che il ti dica.”

(*Purg.* XXIII. 18, 119.)

The most important of the Italian women mentioned in the *Divina Commedia* is, beyond all question, Beatrice, in whose honour Dante wrote his marvellous poem. The concluding words of the *Vita Nuova*, probably written about 1295, state Dante's resolve to “piu degnamente trattar de lei. E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso, sì com'ella sa veracemente. Sicchè, se piacere sarà di Colui, per cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita per alquanti anni duri, spero di dire di lei quello che mai non fu detto d'alcuna.” Certain modern commentators have sought to prove that Beatrice was a purely imaginary personage, but I prefer to follow those who, like Benvenuto da Imola and Boccaccio, lived only seventy years after Dante, and who, with recent tradition still fresh in their memory, positively assert that Beatrice was a real living personality. Benvenuto says that she was a Florentine woman of great beauty and of the most honourable reputation. Boccaccio definitely states that she was the daughter of Folco Portinari, whose family and that of Dante were on terms of friendship. Beatrice, notwithstanding Dante's love for her, married Simone de' Bardi, and died in 1290. I believe that Dante's love for Beatrice was but that deferential adoration so prevalent in the age of Chivalry. Allegorically, Beatrice represents Theology, the divine science, which leads man to the contemplation of God and to the attainment of celestial happiness.

The first mention of her in the *Commedia* is Virgil's account of how she descended into *Limbo* and urged Virgil to hasten to Dante's aid, at the same time revealing her identity :

“Io son Beatrice, che ti faccio andare :

Vegno di loco, ove tornar disio :

Amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare.”

(*Inf.* II. 70-72.)

Dante's first sight of her in the *Divina Commedia* is in the Terrestrial Paradise, when

“ . . . dentro una nuvola di fiori,  
 Che dalle mani angeliche saliva,  
 E ricadea in giù dentro e di fuori,  
 Sopra candido vel cinto d'oliva  
 Donna m'apparve, sotto verde manto,  
 Vestita di color di fiamma viva.”  
 (*Purg.* XXX. 28-33.)

With queenly demeanour Beatrice crushes Dante with her irony :

“ Guardaci ben : ben sem, ben sem Beatrice :  
 Come degnasti d'accedere al monte ? ”  
 (*Ibid.* 73-75.)

Beatrice only once addresses Dante by name :

“ Dante, perchè Virgilio se ne vada  
 Non pianger anco, non pianger ancora,” &c.  
 (*Purg.* XXX. 55, 56) ;

but on no single occasion does Dante address her by name.

After he had been washed in the river Lethe, the four Damsels representing the Cardinal Virtues conduct him to Beatrice's eyes ; and they tell him to gaze at them. He does so, and

“ Mille disiri più che fiamma caldi  
 Strinsermi gli occhi agli occhi rilucenti.”  
 (*Purg.* XXXI. 118,<sup>a</sup>119.)

The other three Damsels, representing the Theological Virtues, then entreat Beatrice to show Dante her mouth, so that he may discern her *seconda bellezza*, which Dante declares himself quite unable to describe :



“O isplendor di viva luce eterna,  
 Chi pallido si fece sotto l'ombra  
 Sì di Parnaso, o bevve in sua cisterna,  
 Che non paresse aver la mente ingombra,  
 Tentando a render te qual tu paresti  
 Là dove armonizzando il ciel t'adombra,  
 Quando nell' aere aperto ti solvesti?”

(*Ibid.* 139-145.)

Throughout Dante's ascent from sphere to sphere of Paradise, on his entrance into each new Heaven, Beatrice's beauty had proportionately increased. In the Empyrean he finds that it has increased to such a pitch, that he is unequal to give the slightest idea of it :

“Se quanto infino a qui di lei si dice  
 Fosse conchiuso tutto in una loda,  
 Poco sarebbe a fornir questa vice.  
 La bellezza ch'io vidi si trasmoda  
 Non pur di là da noi, ma certo io credo  
 Che solo il suo fattor tutta la goda.  
 Da questo passo vinto mi concedo,  
 Più che giammai da punto di sua tema  
 Soprato fosse comico o tragedo.  
 Chè, come sole in viso che più trema,  
 Così lo rimembrar del dolce riso  
 La mente mia di sè medesma scema.”

(*Par.* XXX. 16-27.)

As we before remarked, Dante, at the conclusion of the *Vita Nuova*, said it was his intention and hope to speak of his Beatrice in words, the like of which have never before been offered up in praise of mortal woman. From the day he first beheld her face, the sequence of his song has never been cut short.

Dante lived during a glorious period in the history of the Italian peninsula, and, as we have seen, has given to



the world a series of unrivalled pictures of the great men and women of his own times. Had his life been placed two centuries later, he would have seen the rise of the Renaissance—a movement which was to enrich mankind with marvellous treasures in art, science, and literature, and which was to add so many Italian names to the scroll of fame. He would have found a wealth of illustration in the extraordinary personalities of members of such families as the Medici and the Borgia. Had the poet lived nearer our own days, he would have been able greatly to increase the variety and interest of his striking and picturesque figures, for it has been the happy fortune of his country not only to have a connected history unrivalled in antiquity and importance, but to be the fatherland of a brilliant succession of men of power and genius unsurpassed by those of any other country. Dante would have been able to speak of Saints like Philip Neri and Catherine of Siena; of theologians like Savonarola; of Popes like Nicholas V., Julius II., Leo X., and Pius IX.; of Cardinals like Mezzofanti; of rulers like Vittorio Emanuele; of warriors like Napoleon and Garibaldi; of statesmen like Macchiavelli and Cavour; of citizens like Rienzi; of writers like Boccaccio and Alfieri; of poets like Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso; of men of science like Galileo; of discoverers like Columbus; of musicians like Palestrina, Scarlatti, Rossini, and Verdi; of painters like Fra Angelico, Raphael, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci; of sculptors like Donatello, Michael Angelo, and Benvenuto Cellini; of architects like Brunelleschi and (again) Michael Angelo, who respectively built the two famous cupolas of the Cathedrals of Florence and Rome; of women like Vittoria Colonna, and—if I may be allowed to refer to living personages—I think Dante would have found a niche for one illustrious lady of royal Italian lineage, devoted to the study of his writings, and honoured alike for her sad history as for her noble and stainless life.

Dante would have been proud to include these great names in his poem, but had he lived to see our own time, he would have had still greater cause for the national pride which was so marked a feature in his character. He was an ardent patriot, and deeply loved that

“Europæ regio nobilissima”  
(*De Mon.*, II. iii. 115-117)

and the

“bel paese là dove il sì suona.”  
(*Inf.* XXXIII. 80.)

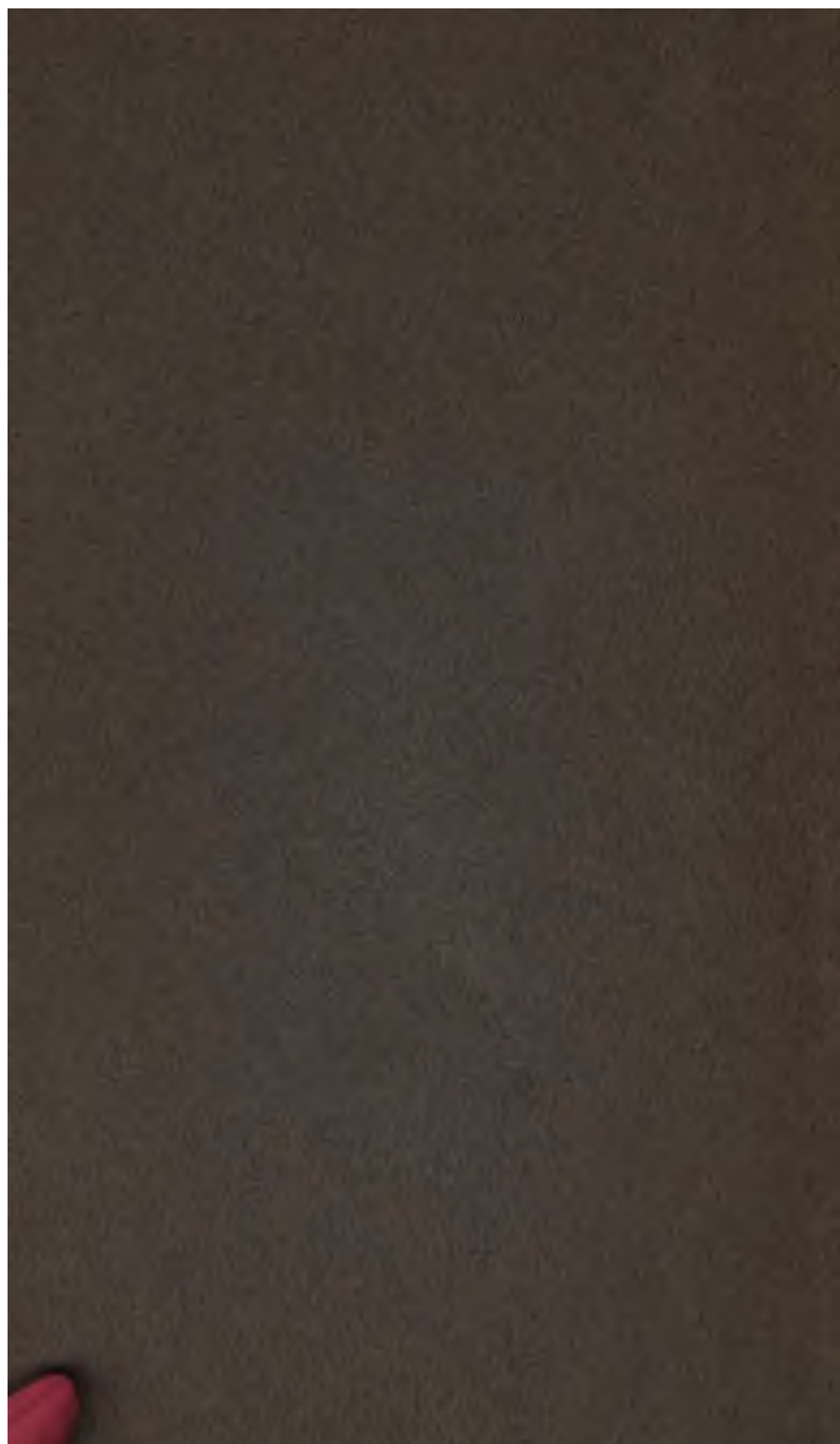
We may therefore imagine with what enthusiasm he would have hailed the unification of Italy, one of the greatest political achievements of the nineteenth century, for it would have been in part the realisation of his dreams. Mankind owes much to Italy and to Italians, and those who, like myself, have lived in Italy, can never forget their love for the country and the people. Speaking, therefore, as an Englishman to Italians as well as to English, I rejoice at the close and friendly relations which, since the establishment of the kingdom, have been maintained between the two nations, and which form so strong a surety for the peace and happiness of the world; and I submit this discourse in a spirit of respectful homage to the memory of that great Italian in whose honour we are now assembled, and whom I trust I may be allowed to term *our* great poet.

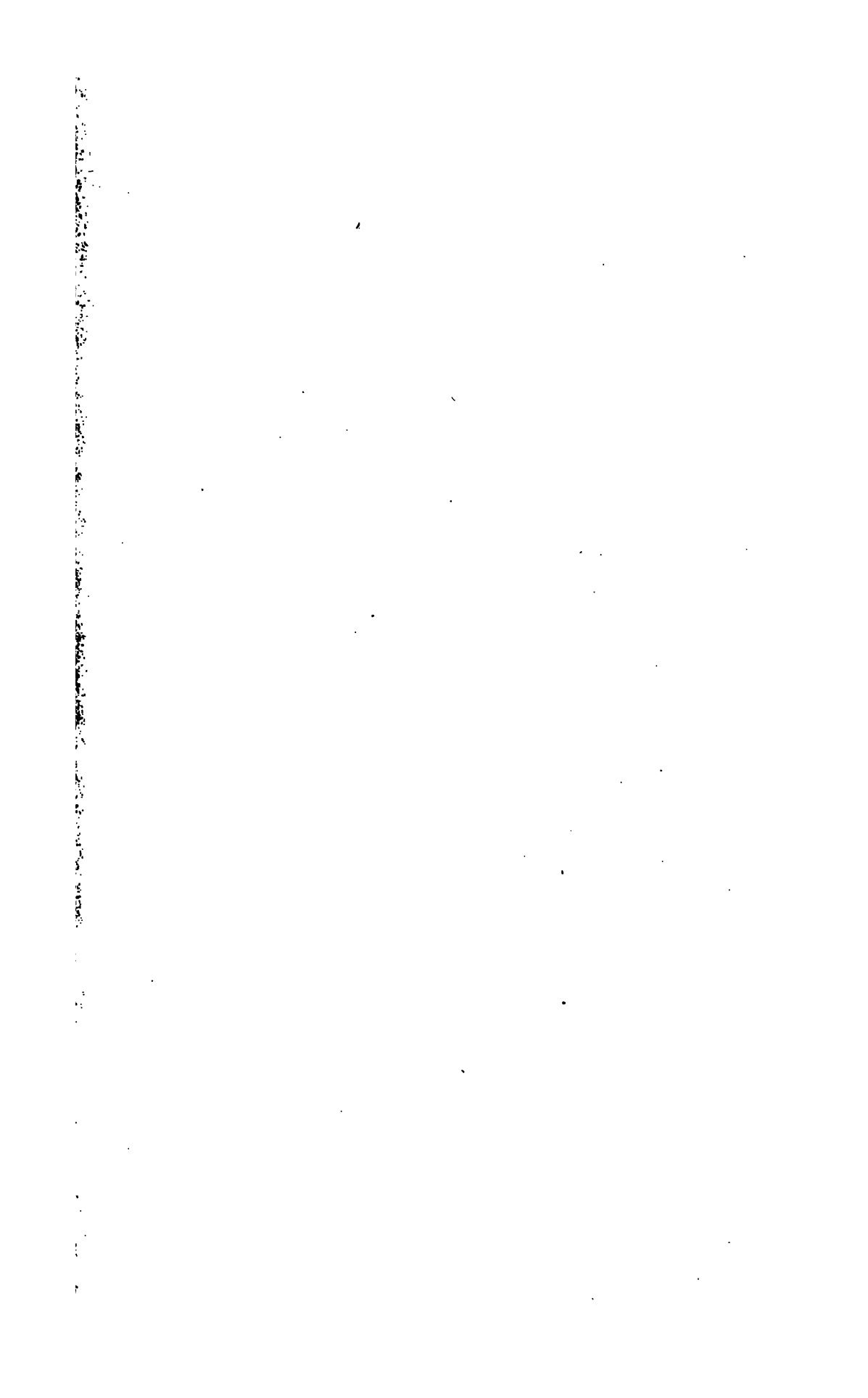
WILLIAM WARREN VERNON

**The Graham Press,**  
**UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED,**  
**WOKING AND LONDON**











1

This book should be returned to  
the Library on or before the last date  
stamped below.

A fine is incurred by retaining it  
beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

3407078

JUN 25 '71 H

CAIN

499714

OCT 20 '75 H

15  
14  
13  
12  
11  
10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

3

Dn 171.2.7  
The great Italians of the Divina Co  
Widener Library 006880573



3 2044 085 950 723